

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

CIA Plotted to Blast Cuba Refinery

By Jack Anderson

The full, fantastic story of the Bay of Pigs has been buried for 16 years deep in the Central Intelligence Agency's fortresslike headquarters near Langley, Va.

All the world knows that CIA-trained Cuban exiles stormed ashore on a Cuban beachhead and were cut to pieces by Dictator Fidel Castro's militiamen 10 years ago today. But the CIA has continued to send assassination teams and commando squads against Castro.

Bit by bit, stories of these post-invasion sorties are leaking out. We have already revealed, for example, how the CIA used a swashbuckling underworld figure, John Roselli, to make six unsuccessful assassination attempts upon Castro.

The CIA assigned two trusted agents, Billy Harvey and "Big Jim" O'Connell, to direct the murder missions. On the first two tries, Roselli's assassins sought to slip poison pellets into Castro's food. The next four attempts were made by sniper teams equipped with high-powered Belgian rifles, explosives and two-way radios.

There were midnight power-boat dashes to secret landing spots on the Cuban coast and machine-gun exchanges in the dark of night with Cuban patrol boats. The last assas-

sination team actually reached a Havana rooftop within rifle range of Castro. But like the others, this squad also was caught and tortured.

Refinery Raid

Now we have learned of a CIA plot to blow up Cuba's most productive oil refinery. Painstaking preparations were made, and a commando team was given intensive training.

Using U-2 photos so detailed that they showed every bush, Maj. Edward Roderick, an Army engineer on loan to the CIA, constructed a blueprint of the plant. He even figured out how mortars could be pre-aimed, then placed by commandos in a precise spot and fired on the run.

But he junked the idea because a human error of an inch or two could send a mortar shell into an inhabited area. Then the whole plan was junked after President Kennedy's assassination.

We have also learned that the CIA scattered \$20 bills around like green confetti to finance the clandestine anti-Castro operations. Bales of money were delivered to Cuban exile leaders, who gave no accounting of how they spent it.

Some were stashed by men since killed. Other thousands were buried in former pirate lairs in the Florida Keys. Still more thousands were strown on the beaches of Cuba where would-be raiders left their bones.

Yet some of the raiders survived. One of them, a young ex-Army captain named Bradley Ayers, has emerged from under cover. He has given us access to his notes, documents, and draft chapters of a book he is writing about his raids for the CIA.

"The Cuban experience," he told us, "has been a plague on the national conscience as it has been on mine. I think it's high time that at least part of the story be told."

CIA Assignment

A former paratrooper, pilot and demolitions expert, Captain Ayers was training rangiers at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., when he received orders to report to the Army's Special Activities Group in Washington.

He was put through physical, psychiatric and lie detector examinations for a week. Then he was hustled over to the CIA's Cuban station.

He was questioned for three days by CIA officials who, finally satisfied, provided him with a cover story, phony documents and a ticket to Miami. He adopted the name Daniel B. Williams and was assigned to a CIA front called Paragon Air Service.

The CIA lodged Ayers and Roderick in a luxurious beach house in Key Biscayne. The two undercover Army men worked out of a CIA front—a colonnaded building with the cover name of Zenith Technical Enterprises—on the south-

campus of Miami University. Through its doors passed some of the nation's most secret operatives: the dapper John Roselli, rugged Bill Harvey, "Rip" Robertson and a huge New Mexican remembered only as "The Big Indian."

Ayers got the assignment of training a tough Cuban cadre in the swamps of the Everglades and the beaches of the Keys. He was supposed to teach them enough surf landing skill, underwater swimming, demolition, boat handling and simple survival for them to lead commandos into Cuba to blow up the multi-million-dollar refinery.

The story of their night landings in Cuba and the great oil refinery fiasco will be told in a future column.